



DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

INFORMATION SERVICE

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

For Release TUESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 1949

WILDLIFE AND CROPS BENEFIT FROM LAND-USE PROGRAM

How modern farm management, soil building and conserving crop rotations, liming, fertilizing, and border plantings of trees, shrubs and lespedeza pay dividends in wildlife by increasing populations of birds and mammals which the land can carry on was shown recently in a Pittman-Robertson project in Ohio, the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service reports.

This cooperative project, the Oldaker Wildlife Restoration Unit, is a 140 acre farm near Russell, Ohio. Purchased by the state with the help of P-R funds, the unit is to be farmed by modern methods and used as a demonstration of farm game management. The funds for the acquisition and development of the farm come from the excise tax on sporting arms and ammunition, from which Congress annually makes an appropriation which is then apportioned to the states.

A four-year rotation involving corn, small grain and two years of meadow was adopted on the farm. Woodlands were no longer used as pasture, and additional plantings of trees and shrubs were made. Multiflora rose hedges replaced some fences, and lespedeza plantings were made in former waste areas, such as turn-rows, gullies, and border plots.

The Ohio Division of Wildlife reports that as a result of this work, the populations of wildlife—almost non-existent previously—jumped in the first year to three cottontails per acre, five squirrels per acre of woods, and a summer nesting population of quail at one bird per five acres. In addition, a three-acre farm pond was completed—to which some muskrats migrated.

This summer populations of small animals had doubled, quail reached a peak of one bird per two acres, pheasants and woodcock multiplied, wood ducks and coot nested near the pond, six muskrat houses were built on the pond, and fox squirrels, woodchucks and racoons were plentiful. In addition, migrating ducks of several species had used the pond in the spring, and bluebirds and other song-birds nested on the farm.

The Service emphasizes that farm and wildlife management, such as practiced on the Oldaker unit, benefit the farmer by giving him increased recreational opportunities, a possible sale of fur animals, and—most important—control of soil erosion and prevention of loss of fertility by leaching of the soils. In addition, field mice which destroy corn shocked in fields, lose their habitat when waste grass strips are converted to hedgerows.

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